

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - September 13, 2005

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced the arraignment late yesterday of Heliodoro Lopez-Fonseca in San Diego before United States Magistrate Judge Ruben B. Brooks on a four-count indictment charging Lopez-Fonseca and two others with federal drug-trafficking offenses arising from the distribution of cocaine and methamphetamine in the Southern District of California. The arraignment follows Lopez-Fonseca's extradition from Mexico to the United States on September 9, 2005.

The indictment charges Lopez-Fonseca, Hilda Consuelo Ruiz-Nevarez, and an individual identified as John Doe with conspiracy to distribute cocaine in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 841(a)(1) (Count 1). It further charges Lopez-Fonseca with possession with intent to distribute cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) (Count 2). In addition, Lopez-Fonseca and John Doe are charged with conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 841(a)(1) (Count 3) and possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) (Count 4).

According to court documents, the investigation initially focused on Tomas Castaneda-Jimenez, charged in a related indictment, alleging that he led several associates selling distribution-quantities of cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin. An affidavit filed in support of the complaint, which preceded the indictments, indicates that the investigation subsequently disclosed Heliodoro Lopez-Fonseca and Olga Luz Aguilar (also charged in a related indictment) as cocaine suppliers for Castaneda-Jimenez. Lopez-Fonseca and Aguilar also allegedly oversaw associates of their own in this drug-distribution organization. In addition to distributing cocaine, Lopez-Fonseca and his associates are also alleged to have conspired to distribute methamphetamine. Also, according to the affidavit, Lopez-Fonseca and Aguilar conspired with Israel Yanez-Aguilar (also charged in a related indictment), another supplier of distribution-quantities of cocaine.

In addition, the affidavit asserts that agents were able to identify Hilda Consuela Ruiz-Nevarez as a source of supply in Mexico who provided cocaine to Lopez-Fonseca, Aguilar, Yanez and Castaneda. Further, according to court documents, the investigation also identified numerous other associates and customers of Ruiz, Lopez-Fonseca, Aguilar, Yanez and Castaneda. Court documents allege that in conjunction with the interception of hundreds of conversations through court-authorized wiretaps, DEA agents and task force officers seized approximately three pounds of methamphetamine and over three kilograms of cocaine.

As a result of the investigation, on February 18, 2004, DEA agents and task force officers arrested nine defendants in the United States. The United States law enforcement agents also obtained assistance from law enforcement officers in Mexico, who arrested Lopez-Fonseca, a Mexican national, in Tijuana, Baja California, Mexico, the same day. The United States then sought extradition of Lopez-Fonseca. At the completion of the extradition process, Lopez-Fonseca was turned over to United States Marshals by Mexican authorities on Friday, September 9, 2005. In addition to Lopez-Fonseca and the nine other defendants arrested on February 18, 2004, six other defendants have been arrested in the United States in this matter.

United States Attorney Lam praised the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) for the coordinated team effort in the culmination of this investigation, and further expressed her appreciation to the Mexican government stating, "The U.S. prosecution of this indicted defendant could not have been

possible without the cooperation of the Mexican government. We all benefit when the United States and Mexico stand united in their commitment to fight the scourge of narcotics trafficking.”

Agents from the United States Marshals Service, San Diego Police Department, National City Police Department and the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as the San Diego District Attorney’s Office, assisted the DEA in this 11-month OCDETF investigation. The OCDETF program was created to consolidate and utilize multiple law enforcement resources in the battle against major drug trafficking.

The defendant will next be in court before Magistrate Judge Brooks on September 15, 2005, at 10:30 a.m. for a hearing.

DEFENDANTS **Criminal Case No. 04 CR 0602 JAH**

HILDA CONSUELO RUIZ-NEVAREZ (Fugitive) Tijuana, BC, Mexico (Count 1)
HELIODORO LOPEZ-FONSECA (Custody, extradited from Mexico) (Counts 1, 2, 3 & 4)
JOHN DOE, aka Guero (Fugitive) (Counts 1, 3 & 4)

Related Indictment: Criminal Case No. 04 CR 0603 JAH

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conspiracy to distribute cocaine and methamphetamine in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 841(a)(1) (Count 1)
Possession with intent to distribute cocaine in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) (Count 2)
Conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 841(a)(1) (Count 3)
Possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) (Count 4)

PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

Drug Enforcement Administration
United States Marshals Service
San Diego County District Attorney
San Diego Police Department
National City Police Department
Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security

An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.